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REMARKS: **Serial No. 09/997,340, filed 11/29/2001.**
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CLIENT/MATTER NO. **200302166-1 (1662-41500)**

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IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

Appellants: Robert A. BOTHAM et al.

Serial No.: 09/997,340

Filed: 11/29/2001

For: Method For Receiving
And Reconciling Physical
Inventory Data Against
An Asset Management
System From A Remote
Location

Confirmation No.: 6075

Group Art Unit: 3627

Examiner: Andrew J. Fischer

Docket No.: 200302166-1

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RESPONSE TO COMMUNICATION RE: APPEAL

Mail Stop Appeal Brief – Patents
Commissioner for Patents
PO Box 1450
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

Date: February 14, 2005

Sir:

In response to the Communication Re: Appeal dated January 11, 2004, Appellants hereby submit the attached revised Appeal Brief in connection with the above-identified application.

~~Respectfully submitted,~~

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IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

Appellants:	Robert A. BOTHAM et al.	§	Confirmation No.:	8075
Serial No.:	09/997,340	§	Group Art Unit:	3627
Filed:	11/29/2001	§	Examiner:	Andrew J. Fischer
For:	Method For Receiving -	§	Docket No.:	200302166-1
	And Reconciling Physical	§		
	Inventory Data Against	§		
	An Asset Management	§		
	System From A Remote	§		
	Location	§		

APPEAL BRIEF

Mail Stop Appeal Brief – Patents
Commissioner for Patents
PO Box 1450
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

Date: February 14, 2005

Sir:

In Response to the Notice dated January 11, 2005, Appellants hereby resubmit this Appeal Brief in connection with the above-identified application. A Notice of Appeal was filed on October 27, 2004. An Amendment after Final was filed October 26, 2004.

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I. REAL PARTY IN INTEREST

The real party in interest is the Hewlett-Packard Development Company (HPDC), a Texas Limited Partnership, having its principal place of business in Houston, Texas, through its merger with Compaq Computer Corporation (CCC) which owned Compaq Information Technologies Group, L.P. (CITG). The Change of Name document from CITG to HPDC was recorded on May 12, 2004, at Reel/Frame 014628/0103.

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II. RELATED APPEALS AND INTERFERENCES

Appellants are unaware of any related appeals or interferences.

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III. STATUS OF THE CLAIMS

Originally filed claims: 1-39.
Claim cancellations: 24, 28, 33 and 36.
Added claims: None.
Presently pending claims: 1-23, 25-27, 29-32, 34, 35 and 37-39.
Presently appealed claims: 1-23, 25-27, 29-32, 34, 35 and 37-39.

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IV. STATUS OF THE AMENDMENTS

A proposed Amendment after Final was filed October 26, 2004; however, the Examiner refused entry of the amendment.

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V. SUMMARY OF THE CLAIMED SUBJECT MATTER

The Specification is directed to a method of receiving and reconciling physical inventory data against an asset management database.¹ Some of the illustrative embodiments are a method comprising taking a physical inventory², creating raw inventory data³, transferring the raw inventory data to a web server⁴, converting the raw inventory data into an intermediate database⁵, creating a copy of the asset management database⁶, reconciling records in the intermediate database against corresponding records in the copy of the asset management database by way of a web browser⁷, and updating the asset management database with records accepted during the reconciling step.⁸ The advantage of such a method is that reconciling physical inventory may be completed in less time than related art methods.⁹

Other illustrative embodiments may be a method comprising scanning with a hand held scanner bar codes identifying locations and bar codes identifying assets to create inventory data¹⁰, transferring the inventory data from the hand held scanner to a web server¹¹, converting the inventory data into an intermediate database¹², making a copy of the asset management database available on the

¹ (Specification Title).

² (Specification Paragraph [0007], lines 9-10). Hereinafter, each cite to the specification has the format ([paragraph(s)], [lines numbers within the paragraph(s)]) as a shorthand notation.

³ ([0018], line 1- [0020], line 6; [0024], lines 1-2).

⁴ ([0020], lines 3-6; [0021], lines 1-8).

⁵ ([0024], lines 2-4).

⁶ ([0026], lines 1-2).

⁷ ([0027], lines 1-3).

⁸ ([0030], lines 1-2).

⁹ ([0009], lines 1-7).

¹⁰ ([0018], lines 12-16; [0019], lines 1-3).

¹¹ ([0020], lines 3-6; [0021], lines 1-8).

¹² ([0024], lines 2-4).

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web server¹³, reconciling records in the intermediate database against corresponding records in the copy of the asset management database on the web server by way of a web browser¹⁴, and updating the asset management database with records accepted during the reconciling step.¹⁵ The advantage of such a method is that reconciling physical inventory may be completed in less time than related art methods.¹⁶

Yet other illustrative embodiments may be a method comprising placing identifying indicia on each location code in the asset management database¹⁷, taking the physical inventory using a portable bar code scanning device that saves physical inventory data in a data file within the portable bar code scanning device¹⁸, transferring the data file to a web server¹⁹, transforming the data file into an intermediate database²⁰, reconciling records of the intermediate database against corresponding records in the asset management database²¹, writing location codes, associated with assets, to the asset management database without the identifying indicia²², and identifying assets not found during the physical inventory in the asset management database by identifying location codes having the identifying indicia.²³ The advantage of such a method is that after reconciling physical inventory, assets not found are easily identified.²⁴

¹³ ([0026], lines 1-8).

¹⁴ ([0027], lines 1-3).

¹⁵ ([0030], lines 1-2).

¹⁶ ([0009], lines 1-7).

¹⁷ ([0034], lines 1-2).

¹⁸ ([0007], lines 9-10; [0018], 12-16).

¹⁹ ([0020], lines 3-8; [0021], lines 1-8).

²⁰ ([0024], lines 2-4).

²¹ ([0027], lines 1-3).

²² ([0034], lines 3-5).

²³ ([0034], lines 5-11).

²⁴ ([0010], lines 11-15).

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VI. GROUNDS OF REJECTION TO BE REVIEWED ON APPEAL

Whether claims 1-23, 25-27, 29-32, 34, 35 and 37-39 are patentable under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Christenson (U.S. Pat. No. 6,662,193) in view of Call (U.S. Pat. No. 6,154,738).

Whether the drawing figures fail to show every feature of the claimed invention.

Whether the refusal to enter the proposed after-final amendments was an abuse of discretion.

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VII. ARGUMENT

A. Claims 1-23 and 25-28.

Claims 1-23 and 25-28 stand rejected as allegedly obvious over Christenson in view of Call. Claim 1 is representative of this group of claims. This grouping is for purposes of this appeal only, and should not be construed to mean the patentability of any of the claims may be determined, in later actions before a court, based on the grouping. Rather, the presumption of 35 U.S.C. § 282 shall apply to each claim individually.

Christensen is directed to methods and systems for manipulating a database through portable data entry devices.²⁵ Christensen's Figure 3, reproduced immediately below, is illustrative of the Christensen system.

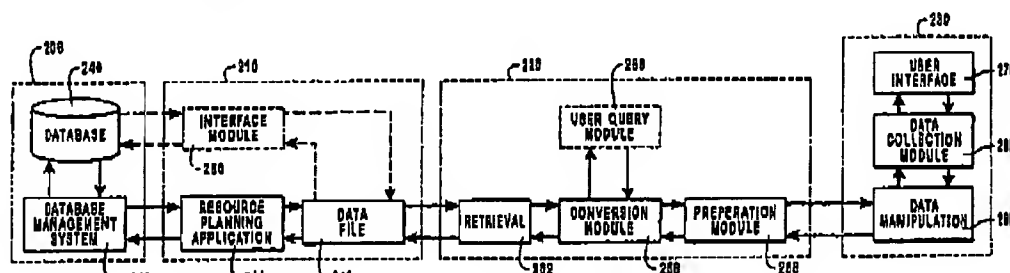


FIG. 3

In the Christensen system, portions of the data from a main database 240 are transferred into a portable data entry device 230 through a data control module 210 and a data manipulation module 220.

In general, many existing databases 240 and database management systems 242 are capable of generating data file 246 or providing the appropriate application programming interface (API) that allows direct communication with database management system 242 and database 240...²⁶

FIG. 4 depicts the processes and methodology for transferring data maintained in the storage module 210 to PDA module 230 through data manipulation module 220.²⁷

²⁵ Christensen's Title.

²⁶ Christensen Col. 8, lines 13-17.

²⁷ Christensen Col. 10, lines 25-27.

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After a portion of the data is transferred from the database 240 to the PDA 230, updating of the data takes place as it exists in the PDA 230.

Data prepared by preparation module 258 is delivered to and from PDA module 230. ...

Data received by data manipulation module 266 [of the PDA 230] **is maintained within the data collection module 268** [of the PDA 230]. Data collection module 268 functions to both store the required data for inventor updating, while storing any updated information that a user may input through user interface 270.²⁸

After updating, updated data is returned to be reconciled against data within database 240.

FIG. 5 represents the flow of updated data, beginning with data in a PDA data structure that passes through manipulation module 220 to be transmitted to storage module 210.²⁹

Once updating is complete ... the data is prepared, such as compressed as encrypted in preparation for and transmittal to the manipulation module 220 ... Manipulation module 220, upon receiving the data in PDA data structure form, converts the data into database data structure form ... **Upon conversion of the data, a reconciliation of the updated data with data contained within database 240 occurs** ...³⁰

It is not until after the data from the PDA is reconciled against the database 240 that the reconciled data is transferred to data file 246, and then written to the database 240.

Once all necessary or specified reconciliation activities are performed the updated data is prepared and delivered to data file 246. ...

The data contained within data file 246 is retrieved by, alternatively, portions of enterprise resource planning application 244 and/or database management system 242, such that the associated database engine may store and update database 240...³¹

²⁸ Christensen Col. 9, lines 31-52 (emphasis added).

²⁹ Christensen Col. 10, lines 27-30.

³⁰ Christensen Col. 12, lines 6-13 (emphasis added).

³¹ Christensen Col. 12, lines 23-36.

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Call is relied upon only for a teaching of a Web based system to transfer Information.

Illustrative claim 1, by contrast, specifically recites, "taking a physical Inventory creating raw Inventory data; transferring the raw inventory data to a web server; converting the raw inventory data into an intermediate database; creating a copy of the asset management database; reconciling records in the intermediate database against corresponding records in the copy of the asset management database by way of a web browser; and updating the asset management database with records accepted during the reconciling step." The Office action relies on the portion of Christensen's database transferred to the PDA as both the claimed intermediate database³² and the copy of the asset management database.³³ Inasmuch as the illustrative claim calls for a separate intermediate database and copy of the main asset management data base, and further calls for "reconciling records in the intermediate database against corresponding records in the copy of the asset management database," the intermediate database and the copy of the asset management database cannot be the same database. For this reason alone, the rejection of the grouping of claims represented by illustrative claim 1 over Christensen and Call should be overturned.

Further with regard to Christensen and Call, if data transferred to the data manipulation module 220 by the PDA module 230 is the claimed intermediate database (which Appellants do not admit), and if data in Christensen's data file 246 is the claimed copy of the asset management database (again which Appellants do not admit), Christensen and Call still fail to teach "reconciling records in the intermediate database against corresponding records in the copy of the asset management database." In fact, Christensen teaches away from such a system by expressly teaching reconciling against the main asset

³² Office action dated July 28, 2004, paragraph 8.

³³ Office action, paragraph 8.

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database 240³⁴, and by writing reconciled data to the data file 246 before writing the data to the main database.³⁵ For this additional reason, the rejection of the grouping of claims represented by illustrative claim 1 over Christensen and Call should be overturned.

Further with regard to the proposed combination of Christensen and Call, the Manual of Patent Examining Procedures (MPEP) provides guidance as to when a combination is improper.

If the proposed modification or combination of the prior art would change the principle of operation of the prior art invention being modified, then the teachings of the references are not sufficient to render the claims *prima facie* obvious.³⁶

In Christensen, a portion of the main database 240 is transferred to the PDA 230.³⁷ Illustrative claim 1, by contrast, specifically recites, "transferring the raw inventory data to a web server; converting the raw inventory data into an intermediate database; creating a copy of the asset management database; reconciling records in the intermediate database against corresponding records in the copy of the asset management database by way of a web browser" Because the intermediate database exists on the web server, and further because reconciling is with respect to the intermediate database and the copy of the asset management database, it is clear that illustrative claim 1 does not transfer the copy of the asset management database to the location of the raw inventory data. To non-textually modify Christensen to, in combination with Call, render obvious the limitations of illustrative claim 1 changes the principle of operation of Christensen of sending a portion of the main database 240 all the way to the PDA 230, and back again. For this additional reason, the rejection of the grouping of claims represented by illustrative claim 1 over Christensen and Call should be overturned.

³⁴ Christensen Col. 12, lines 6-13.

³⁵ Christensen Col. 12, lines 23-38.

³⁶ MPEP § 2143.01 (emphasis original).

³⁷ Christensen Col. 8, lines 13-17; Col. 10, lines 25-27.

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Based on the forgoing, Appellants respectfully submit that Christensen taken with Call do not teach or fairly suggest the limitations of the claims represented by illustrative claim 1, and that the rejection of the Office action be reversed and the claims of this grouping set for issue.

B. Claims 29-32, 34-35 and 37-39

Claims 29-32, 34-35 and 37-39 stand rejected as allegedly obvious over Christenson in view of Call. Claim 34 is representative of this group of claims. This grouping is for purposes of this appeal only, and should not be construed to mean the patentability of any of the claims may be determined, in later actions before a court, based on the grouping. Rather, the presumption of 35 U.S.C. § 282 shall apply to each claim individually.

Illustrative claim 34 specifically recites, "placing identifying indicia on each location code in the asset management database; taking the physical inventory using a portable bar code scanning device that saves physical inventory data in a data file within the portable bar code scanning device; transferring the data file to a web server; transforming the data file into an intermediate database; reconciling records of the intermediate database against corresponding records in the asset management database; writing location codes, associated with assets, to the asset management database without the identifying indicia; and identifying assets not found during the physical inventory in the asset management database by identifying location codes having the identifying indicia." The advantage of such a method is that after reconciling physical inventory, assets not found are easily identified by looking for assets in the main asset management database still having the identifying indicia.³⁸ No citation is made to either Christensen or Call regarding "placing identifying indicia on each location code in the asset management database," or "writing location codes, associated with assets, to the asset management database without the identifying indicia; and identifying assets not found during the physical inventory in the asset management database by identifying location codes having the identifying indicia." Thus, the Office action

³⁸ ([0010], lines 11-15).

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fails to make a *prima facie* case of obviousness with respect to the grouping of claims represented by illustrative claim 34.

Based on the forgoing, Appellants respectfully submit that Christensen taken with Call do not teach or fairly suggest the limitations of the claims represented by illustrative claim 34, and that the rejection of the Office action be reversed and the claims of this grouping set for issue.

C. Objection Regarding The Drawings and Claim 11.

The Office action objects to the drawings alleging that "converting the raw inventory data into a Structure Query Language (SQL) format database"³⁹ as recited in claim 11 is not shown in the drawings.

Claim 11 reads in its entirety:

11. The method of as defined in claim 1 wherein converting the raw inventory data into an intermediate database further comprises converting the raw inventory data into a structured query language (SQL) format database having fields for location codes and associated asset codes.⁴⁰

Thus, contrary to the implication created by the selective cropping of claim 11 in the Final Office action, the question is not whether the figures show converting the raw inventory data into a SQL format database as a separate database from the intermediate database; but rather, the question is whether the figures show converting to an intermediate database, which takes a SQL form.

With regard to the form of the intermediate database, Appellants' specification specifically states, "the conversion program performs the conversion from the preferred comma delimited ASCII text file as raw scanner data into an SQL database, to be the intermediate database 48." From this it is seen that in some embodiments the intermediate database is a SQL database. Figure 2 clearly states, "convert scanner file into an intermediate database." Thus, Appellant's Figure 2 illustrates converting to an intermediate database as claimed. Taking the objection to its logical conclusion would require a separate

³⁹ Final Office action dated July 28, 2004, paragraphs 5 and 13-15.

⁴⁰ Claim 11 (emphasis added).

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figure similar to Figure 2 for every specific type of intermediate database claimed. This, however, conveys to the reader no further information than can already be gleaned from the specification and claims, and would unduly complicate the drawings and the description, all with no attendant benefit to the public. In summary, Appellants submit that the objection herein appealed either takes 37 CFR § 1.183(a) to an extreme beyond its drafter's intention, or if the Board sees the expanse of § 1.183(a) as written to be as broad as that asserted in the various Office actions, that for public policy reason the interpretation be pared back to a more reasonable interpretation that does not elevate form over substance.

Appellants therefore respectfully request that the objection of the Office action be overturned, and the case set for issue.

D. Abuse of Discretion In Refusing Entry of the Proposed After-Final Amendment

The crux of the decision that the Board must make with respect to the objection to the drawings discussed in Section C above is whether a drawing that states, "convert scanner file into an intermediate database" supports a claim where an intermediate database is **specifically claimed**, and is further refined to be a SQL database.

To help bring this issue into better focus for the Board, to further the prosecution of this case and thus to conserve Patent & Trademark Office resources, Appellants presented a proposed after-final amendment, prior to filing of the Notice of Appeal,⁴¹ as follows:

11. The method of as defined in claim 1 wherein converting the raw inventory data into an intermediate database further comprises converting the raw inventory data into the intermediate database being a structured query language (SQL) format database having fields for location codes and associated asset codes.

Although Appellants submit that it was clear from originally submitted claim 11 that the specific form of the intermediate database was refined to be a SQL

⁴¹ See 37 CFR § 41.33 which severely restricts amendments submitted contemporaneously with or after filing of the Notice of Appeal.

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database, as opposed to a SQL database separate and apart from the intermediate database, Appellants submitted the proposed after-final amendment to put the claim in better condition for appeal, and it was the only claim amendment proposed. Entry was refused on the grounds that it allegedly "raise[d] new issue[s] that would require further consideration and/or search," in spite of the fact that the issue as to the claim was argued in the Response to Office action dated March 27, 2004, and addressed in the Final Office action dated July 28, 2004. The amendment thus did not raise any new issues for the astute Examiner or require a further search.

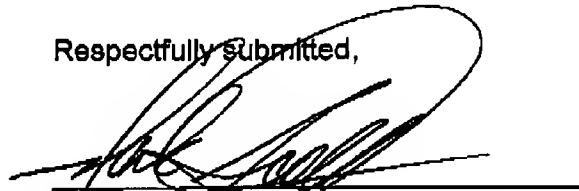
Appellants acknowledge that entry of amendments after final is not a matter of right and is at the discretion of the Examiner; however, 37 CFR § 1.116 specifically states, "Amendments presenting a rejected claim in better form for consideration on appeal may be admitted." Appellants respectfully submit that the proposed after-final amendment clearly put claim 11 in a better condition for consideration on appeal by bringing into focus the question to be addressed by the Board. Thus, the refusal to enter the proposed after-final amendment was an abuse of discretion, should be overturned, and the appealed issue with respect to Section C above considered in view of claim 11 amended as shown in this Section D.

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VIII. CONCLUSION

For the reasons stated above, Appellants respectfully submit that the Examiner erred in rejecting all pending claims. It is believed that no extensions of time or fees are required, beyond those that may otherwise be provided for in documents accompanying this paper. However, in the event that additional extensions of time are necessary to allow consideration of this paper, such extensions are hereby petitioned under 37 C.F.R. § 1.136(a), and any fees required (including fees for net addition of claims) are hereby authorized to be charged to Hewlett-Packard Development Company's Deposit Account No. 08-2025.

Respectfully Submitted,



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IX. CLAIMS APPENDIX

1. (Original) A method of reconciling physical inventory against an asset management database, the method comprising:

- taking a physical inventory;
- creating raw inventory data;
- transferring the raw inventory data to a web server;
- converting the raw inventory data into an intermediate database;
- creating a copy of the asset management database;
- reconciling records in the intermediate database against corresponding records in the copy of the asset management database by way of a web browser; and
- updating the asset management database with records accepted during the reconciling step.

2. (Previously presented) The method as defined in claim 1 wherein taking physical inventory and creating raw inventory data further comprises, with a hand held bar code scanning device:

- scanning a location code;
- scanning assets codes associate with that location code;
- repeating the scanning step at a plurality of locations and for a plurality of assets codes;
- storing the location codes and the asset codes in the hand held bar code scanning device.

3. (Previously presented) The method as defined in claim 2 wherein storing the location codes and the asset codes in the hand held bar code scanning device further comprises storing the location codes and the asset codes in a file in the hand held bar code scanner.

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4. (Previously presented) The method as defined in claim 3 wherein storing the location codes and asset codes in a file further comprises storing the location codes and asset codes in a comma delimited ASCII text file.
5. (Previously presented) The method as defined in claim 3 wherein transferring the raw inventory data to a web server further comprises copying the file to a web server using a file transfer protocol (FTP) program.
6. (Previously presented) The method as defined in claim 3 wherein transferring the raw inventory data to a web server further comprises:
moving the file to an intermediate device; and then
copying the file from the intermediate device to the web server.
7. (Previously presented) The method as defined in claim 6 wherein moving the file to an intermediate device further comprises broadcasting the file using electromagnetic waves.
8. (Previously presented) The method as defined in claim 6 wherein moving the file to an intermediate device further comprises:
copying the file to a storage device; and then
copying the file from the storage device to the intermediate device.
9. (Previously presented) The method as defined in claim 8 wherein copying the file to a storage device further comprises copying the file to a floppy disk.
10. (Previously presented) The method as defined in claim 6 wherein moving the file to an intermediate device further comprises moving the file to a computer system having an internet connection.
11. (Previously presented) The method of as defined in claim 1 wherein converting the raw inventory data into an intermediate database further comprises

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converting the raw inventory data into a structured query language (SQL) format database having fields for location codes and associated asset codes.

12. (Previously presented) The method as defined in claim 11 further comprising creating additional fields associated with each asset code to identify a person who performs the reconciliation step.

13. (Previously presented) The method as defined in claim 1 wherein reconciling records in the intermediate database against corresponding records in the copy of the asset management database by way of a web browser further comprises:

- invoking a web browser program;
- entering a user identification;
- entering a password;
- displaying corresponding records between the intermediate database and the copy of the asset management database;
- reconciling the corresponding records creating reconciled records; and
- marking at least some of the reconciled records as accepted.

14. (Previously presented) The method as defined in claim 13 wherein invoking a web browser program further comprises invoking an Internet Explorer® web browser.

15. (Previously presented) The method as defined in claim 13 wherein displaying corresponding records between the intermediate database and the copy of the asset management database further comprises:

- displaying a record from the intermediate database based on an asset code; and
- displaying a record from the copy of the asset management database based on the asset code.

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16. (Previously presented) The method as defined in claim 13 wherein updating the asset management database with records accepted during the reconciling step further comprises copying to the asset management database reconciled records marked as accepted.

17. (Previously presented) The method as defined in claim 1 wherein taking a physical inventory further comprises taking a physical inventory of computer assets.

18. (Previously presented) A method of taking a physical inventory and reconciling the physical inventory against an asset management database, the method comprising:

- scanning with a hand held scanner bar codes identifying locations and bar codes identifying assets to create inventory data;
- transferring the inventory data from the hand held scanner to a web server;
- converting the inventory data into an intermediate database;
- making a copy of the asset management database available on the web server;
- reconciling records in the intermediate database against corresponding records in the copy of the asset management database on the web server by way of a web browser; and
- updating the asset management database with records accepted during the reconciling step.

19. (Previously presented) The method as defined in claim 18 wherein scanning with a hand held scanner bar codes identifying locations and bar codes identifying assets further comprises:

- scanning a plurality of bar codes identifying locations; and
- scanning a bar code identifying at least one asset associated with each location.

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20. (Previously presented) The method as defined in claim 19 wherein creating inventory data further comprises storing the bar codes identifying the locations and also storing the bar codes identifying assets in a file in the hand held scanner.

21. (Previously presented) The method as defined in claim 20 wherein transferring the inventory data from the hand held scanner to a web server further comprises transferring the file from the hand held scanner to the web server.

22. (Previously presented) The method as defined in claim 21 wherein transferring the file from the hand held scanner to the web server further comprises transferring the file using a file transfer protocol (FTP) program.

23. (Previously presented) The method as defined in claim 21 wherein transferring the file from the hand held scanner to the web server further comprises;

transferring the file from the hand held scanner to an intermediate device;

and

transferring the file from the intermediate device to the web server using the FTP protocol.

24. (Cancelled).

25. (Previously presented) The method as defined in claim 23 wherein transferring the file from the hand held scanner to the intermediate device further comprises:

copying the file to a disk; and then

copying the file from the disk to the intermediate device.

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26. (Previously presented) The method as defined in claim 23 wherein transferring the file from the hand held scanner to the web server further comprises;

transferring the file from the hand held scanner to a laptop computer; and
transferring the file from laptop computer to the web server using the FTP
protocol.

27. (Previously presented) The method as defined in claim 18 wherein converting the inventory data into an intermediate database further comprises converting the inventory data into a structured query language (SQL) database resident on the web server.

28. (Cancelled).

29. (Previously presented) The method as defined in claim 18 further comprising, before the step of making a copy of the asset management database, placing an identifying indicia on a portion of each record in the asset management database.

30. (Previously presented) The method as defined in claim 29 wherein updating the asset management database with records accepted during the reconciling step further comprises writing the updated records without the identifying indicia.

31. (Previously presented) The method as defined in claim 30 further comprising, after reconciling is complete:

searching the asset management database for records having the
identifying indicia; and thereby
identifying assets that were not found during the physical inventory.

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32. (Previously presented) The method as defined in claim 29 wherein placing an identifying indicia on a portion of each record in the asset management database further comprises appending a code to the end of each seat code.

33. (Cancelled).

34. (Previously presented) A method of reconciling a physical inventory of assets against an asset management database and identifying assets not located in the physical inventory, the method comprising:

placing identifying indicia on each location code in the asset management database;

taking the physical inventory using a portable bar code scanning device that saves physical inventory data in a data file within the portable bar code scanning device;

transferring the data file to a web server;

transforming the data file into an intermediate database;

reconciling records of the intermediate database against corresponding records in the asset management database;

writing location codes, associated with assets, to the asset management database without the identifying indicia; and

identifying assets not found during the physical inventory in the asset management database by identifying location codes having the identifying indicia.

35. (Previously presented) The method as defined in claim 34 wherein placing identifying indicia on each location code in the asset management database further comprises appending a code to the end of each location code.

36. (Cancelled).

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37. (Previously presented) The method as defined in claim 34 wherein taking the physical inventory using a portable bar code scanning device that saves physical inventory data in a data file within the portable bar code scanning device further comprises, at a plurality of locations:

- scanning a location code that uniquely identifies the location; and
- scanning at least one asset code of an asset at the location.

38. (Previously presented) The method as defined in claim 34 wherein transferring the data file to a web server further comprises:

- coupling the portable bar code scanning device to an Internet connection;
- and
- transferring the data file to the web server using an FTP program.

39. (Previously presented) The method as defined in claim 34 wherein reconciling records of the intermediate database against corresponding records in the asset management database further comprises:

- making a copy of the asset management database residing on the web server;
- reconciling records in the intermediate database against corresponding records in the copy of the asset management database.